(ii) to render advice on issues referred to it by Government on classification of goods and products alongwith the applicable tariffs on such goods and products;

(iii) to carry out technical studies on cost of production of different goods and services and their competitiveness in relation to other countries so as to generate data and parameters relevant to tariff fixation.

(iv) to undertake such other tasks as may assigned by Government from time to time; and

(v) to present an Annual Report to Government of its activities.

Changes in Small Scale and Cottage Industries sector

496. SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state the changes, if any, Government contemplate to introduce in small scale and cottage industries sectors?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): The development of Small Scale Industries Sector is a continuous process, which is ensured through various policies viz. adequate and timely credit, fiscal concession protection through reservation of items, technology up gradation and modernisation, entrepreneurship training, etc. These policies are reoriented from time to time and the changes incorporated where found feasible in order to facilitate the overall growth of this sector.

Backlog of patent cases

497. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news report appearing in the Hindustan Times dated the 15th April, 1998 under the caption "efforts on to enhance manpower of patent offices to clear backlog";

(b) if so, the reaction of Government to the observations made therein and action taken/ proposed to be taken in the matter;

(c) the present status regarding the nature of reforms and legislation proposed to be brought about during the current year;

(d) what is the pendency position of patent received/processed/cleared and pending as on 31st April, 1998; and

(e) whether there is a proposal to shift Apex Patent Office from Calcutta to New Delhi; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) In the absence of any significant modernisation or restructuring of the patent administration system since its establishment, over 29,000 patent applications were awiting examination as in April, 1998. This has led to delays in grant of patents. During the period 1997-98, 1844 patents were granted.

The Government has been taking steps from time to time to modernise the system including the preparation of a plan to provide reguired qualified personnel, infrastructural facilities, optimisation of available resources through reorientation of functions between offices and elimination of backlog of patent applications.

Revival of sick industrial units

498. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large chunk of viable sick industries, on propoer assessment, has been restarted under Rehabilitation on Revival Programme through special assistance in various States;

(b) if so, the details of the funds provided, State-wise for sick industrial units under the scheme for revival of potentially to viable sick units during 8th Plan;

(c) the details of ambitious Programme finalised to deal with industrial sickness during 9th Plan; and

(d) whether renewal of funds have been properly utilised by the States during the last three years with State-wise, breakup and the results in terms of rehabilitation of workers achieved?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) to (c) According to Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR), 2145 sick industrial companies were registered with them under the

provisions of the Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act, 1985 from 1987 to 31.3.1998. 625 rehabilitation schemes were sanctioned for revival of the sick industrial companies registered with the Board. Out of this, 202 companies have gone out of the purview of the Board as they have been declared no longer sick on implementation of the scheme. The rehabilitation schemes sanctioned by BIFR include various measures like restructuring the capital, induction of fresh funds by the promoters, merger with other companies, change of management, provision for working capital and term loans by Banks and Financial Institutions. Reliefs and conessions by various parties also form part of the scheme.

(d) The assistance from National Renewal Fund is presently restricted to Voluntary Retirement Scheme in Central Public Sector Undertakings and to the schemes for counselling, retraining and redeployment of rationalised workers. In terms of information available, 6712 rationalised workers have been redeployed upto 31.3.1998.

सेवा-निवृत्ति/मृत्यु उपदान की सीमा में बढ़ोतरी

499. **श्री चीमनभाई हरीभाई शुक्ल:** क्या श्रम मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार ने सिविल सेवा (पेंशन) नियम, 1972 के अन्तर्गत सेवा: निवृत्ति/मृत्यु उपदान की अधिकतम सीमा को एक लाख रुपये से बढ़ाकर 2.5 लाख रुपये कर दिया है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो इसे किस तिथि से लागू किया गया और इसके क्या आधार हैं;

(ग) क्या सरकार सरकारी उद्यमों/नियमों को भी यही लाभ समान रूप से देने का विचार रखती है;

(घ) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(ङ) यदि नहीं, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं?

श्रम मंत्री (डा॰ सत्यनारायण जटिया): (क) और (ख) केन्द्रीय सिविल सेवा (पेंशन) नियम, 1972 के अन्तर्गत मृत्यु-सह-सेवानिवृत्ति उपदान (डी सी आर जी) की अधिकतम सीमा पांचवें वेतन आयोग द्वारा अपनी अन्तरिम रिपोर्ट में की गयी सिफारिश के अनुसार 1.4.1995 से 1.00 लाख रुपये से बढ़ाकर 2.50 लाख रुपये कर दी गई और 1.1.96 से इसे बढ़ाकर 3.50 लाख रुपये कर दिया गया।

(ग) से (ङ) केन्द्रीय सिविल सेवा (पेंशन) नियम के उपबंध केवल कुछ सरकारी कर्मचारियों पर ही लागू हैं और इस प्रकार नियमों और सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र-उपक्रमों के कर्मचारियों को इसका लाभ प्रदान करने का प्रश्न नहीं उठता है। तथापि, सरकार ने अब उपदान संदाय आधिनियम 1972 में संशोधन करने का निर्णय लिया है ताकि 24.9.1997 से सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के कर्मचारियों सहित सभी कर्मचारियों को संदेय उपदान की अधिकतम राशि की उच्चतम सीमा 1.00 लाख रुपये से बढ़ाकर 3.50 लाख रुपये की जा सके।

Wages in small scale industries

500. **SHRI ASHOK MITRA:** Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether time series of real wages are available for small scale industries in the country;

(b) whether similar data are available on the trends in growth of employment in such industries; and

(c) whether Government propose to enquire into the impact of the reforms introduced since 1991 on the level of living standard of workers engaged in cottage and small scale activities?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): (a) Data in this regard is not maintained.

(b) Estimates of employment and its growth are as under:—

Year	Employment (in lakh No.)	Percentage growth over previous year.
1990-91	125.30	..
1991-92	129.80	3.28
1992-93	134.06	3.59
1993-94	139.38	3.97
1994-95	146.450	5.15
1995-96	152.61	4.13
1996-97 (Provisional)	160.00	4.84

(c) There is no proposal at present to undertake any specific enquiry/study in this regard.